

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 131

April 6, 1995, 9:48 p.m.
Page S-5360 Temp. Record

DISASTER SUPPLEMENTAL-RESCISSIONS/CPB and Radio Free Europe

SUBJECT: Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Disaster Assistance and Rescissions Act . . . H.R. 1158. Harkin amendment No. 579 to the Hatfield substitute amendment No. 420.

ACTION: AMENDMENT REJECTED, 46-53

SYNOPSIS: As introduced, H.R. 1158, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Disaster Assistance and Rescissions Act, will provide \$5.360 billion in emergency appropriations for disaster assistance, and will rescind \$17.188 billion for various Departments and agencies.

The Hatfield substitute amendment would strike the provisions of H.R. 1158 and insert in lieu thereof the text of S. 617, as reported, which would provide \$6.700 billion in disaster assistance (the amount requested by the President), would rescind \$13.286 billion for various Departments and agencies, and would provide for expedited salvage timber sales on Federal lands for fiscal years 1995 and 1996.

The Harkin amendment would add back \$26 million of the proposed \$55.7 million rescission for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) over fiscal years (FYs) 1996 and 1997 and the \$14.4 million proposed rescission for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (from a \$410.4 million FY 1995 appropriation), and would offset the costs by rescinding \$40.5 million for Radio Free Europe (leaving it with \$175 million for FY 1995).

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

Argument 1:

Republican efforts to privatize the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) have been victimized by a frenetic disinformation campaign. Numerous commentators have stridently suggested that Republicans are trying to get rid of the CPB. Nothing could be further from the truth. Much of the CPB's programming is highly commendable and should continue. However, it need not, and

(See other side)

YEAS (46)			NAYS (53)			NOT VOTING (1)	
Republicans (5 or 9%)	Democrats (41 or 91%)		Republicans (49 or 91%)	Democrats (4 or 9%)		Republicans (0)	Democrats (1)
Cohen	Akaka	Hollings	Abraham	Helms	Biden		Mikulski- ²
Grassley	Baucus	Inouye	Ashcroft	Hutchison	Bradley		
Roth	Bingaman	Johnston	Bennett	Inhofe	Nunn		
Snowe	Boxer	Kennedy	Bond	Jeffords	Pell		
Warner	Breaux	Kerrey	Brown	Kassebaum			
	Bryan	Kerry	Burns	Kempthorne			
	Bumpers	Kohl	Campbell	Kyl			
	Byrd	Lautenberg	Chafee	Lott			
	Conrad	Leahy	Coats	Lugar			
	Daschle	Levin	Cochran	Mack			
	Dodd	Lieberman	Coverdell	McCain			
	Dorgan	Moseley-Braun	Craig	McConnell			
	Exon	Moynihan	D'Amato	Murkowski			
	Feingold	Murray	DeWine	Nickles			
	Feinstein	Pryor	Dole	Packwood			
	Ford	Reid	Domenici	Pressler			
	Glenn	Robb	Faircloth	Santorum			
	Graham	Rockefeller	Frist	Shelby			
	Harkin	Sarbanes	Gorton	Simpson			
	Heflin	Simon	Gramm	Smith			
		Wellstone	Grams	Specter			
			Gregg	Stevens			
			Hatch	Thomas			
			Hatfield	Thompson			
				Thurmond			

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

therefore should not, continue at public expense. Republican efforts are not aimed at destroying the CPB, as has been alleged, but are instead simply designed to wean it from Federal spending.

Public television was initially created on the rationale that educational and cultural programming could not survive in the free market without heavy government subsidies. Perhaps in public television's infancy this rationale was true, but it certainly is not true anymore. Technological advances in the communications industry, as well as the maturing of the CPB, have made public broadcasting more than capable of making its way in the world on its own. Educational and cultural programs can be and are profitable when produced well, as has been proven by cable channels like Discovery and A&E (Arts and Entertainment). The CPB also produces numerous high quality programs, like Sesame Street, Barney, and the Ken Burns series on the Civil War. The fact that it partially relies on Government welfare does not reflect at all on its capabilities, but instead reflects on its poor management.

Numerous steps could be taken by the CPB to end its reliance on Federal aid. First, it could renegotiate sales agreements with its more successful programs like Barney, which had merchandise sales last year of \$1 billion. Second, it could eliminate signal redundancy in areas like Washington, DC, where several public stations broadcast the same programs simultaneously. Third, it could switch from expensive VHF frequencies to cheaper UHF frequencies. Fourth, it could make greater use of new technologies, such as by using compressed signals. Fifth, it could expand into new markets, such as compact discs for computers. The opportunities for the CPB are limitless if it will end its dependency on the Federal Government. It really does not have very far to go. The Federal Government provides only a small share of its total revenues.

Our only objection to the rescissions for the CPB in the Hatfield substitute amendment are that they would not go far enough. All the rescissions would do is cut FY 1996 and FY 1997 funding to the FY 1995 level. Deep cuts should instead be made. Under no circumstances, though, should the CPB be given more money in the next two fiscal years, as advocated by the Harkin amendment. Therefore, we strongly urge the tabling of this amendment.

Argument 2:

We would be delighted to increase funding for the CPB and for the Senior Community Service Employment Program, but not at the expense of Radio Free Europe. Radio Free Europe is far too important. Its achievements over the course of the Cold War are almost impossible to underestimate, and the need for its continuation is arguably as great today as ever.

Our colleagues' characterization of Radio Free Europe as a vaguely nefarious creature of the Central Intelligence Agency that has outlived any usefulness it may have once had is grotesquely out of touch with reality. This broadcast service is one of the finest, noblest undertakings the Western World has ever engaged in. To win the Cold War, the people who were trapped by the Soviet Empire needed access to the truth. Totalitarian propaganda and censorship could not be allowed to succeed if the values of freedom and democracy were to take root and grow in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. When the Soviet Empire fell, the leaders of the new democracies, including Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel, and Boris Yeltsin, all cited Radio Free Europe as being the single greatest factor in bringing an end to totalitarianism. Communism was held at bay by the strength of Western defenses, but it fell from the strength of Western ideals.

The job, however, is not yet done. Though the Soviet Empire has collapsed, the region is now in economic and political chaos. In the newly formed nations of the former Soviet Union especially, this chaos has increasingly resulted in the censorship of newspapers and the shutting down of independent television stations. This drift back toward totalitarian practices can best be countered by continuing to provide the people of these countries with broadcasts that accurately tell them what is happening in their countries. Armed with the truth, we are certain that they will be able to resist efforts to turn back the tide of democracy. Without an informed populace, though, totalitarian forces may yet retake control.

Some Senators have falsely suggested that broadcasts by Radio Free Europe are duplicative of Voice of America, British Broadcasting Corporation, and Cable News Network broadcasts. The truth is that Radio Free Europe broadcasts are unique. They alone provide information to their listeners on what is happening in their own countries. The other three broadcast services, on the other hand, provide international news. The third, Cable News Network, is only in English, and is generally only available to the few rich or well-connected individuals who have access to satellite dishes. Given these facts, it is not surprising that Radio Free Europe has a larger following than any other broadcaster throughout the former Soviet Empire, with an estimated 25 million regular listeners.

We are not opposed to trying to make Radio Free Europe more efficient. Accordingly, we strongly support its ongoing consolidation with the Voice of America. In fact, nearly half of its budget for this year is to meet the one-time costs of this consolidation. The new headquarters for the consolidated broadcast effort will be in the former Czechoslovak Federal Parliament Building, which President Havel of the Czech Republic has offered at an annual rent of \$12. Most of the costs associated with moving from Germany to the Czech Republic are unavoidable; \$67 million in various severance payments for former employees in Germany, for example, must be provided by German law. Rescinding \$40 million, as proposed by the Harkin amendment, would make it difficult to complete the scheduled consolidation as planned, and would thus delay the \$400 million in savings that are expected from the consolidation by 1997. This rescission may thus end up costing money over the next few years instead of saving it.

In a recent survey of high government officials from the fledgling democracies of the former Soviet Empire, fully 75 percent supported the continuation of Radio Free Europe. We urge our colleagues to join us, these leaders, and 25 million loyal listeners in

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opposing the Harkin amendment's rescission of funds for this critical broadcast service.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

The Harkin amendment has three elements, each of which would deserve to be passed alone on its merits. First, it would cut \$40 million from a Cold War relic, Radio Free Europe. Second, it would add back \$26 million of the rescission for the CPB, which provides the best broadcast programming in America. Third, it would eliminate the \$14 million rescission for the Senior Community Service Employment Program, which is the only Federal work force program designed to help the elderly get jobs.

The \$40 million cut for Radio Free Europe is, if anything, too small. This Cold War relic, which was created by the Central Intelligence Agency to beam shortwave radio signals behind the Iron Curtain, should be totally eliminated. The Iron Curtain has fallen and the citizens of the resulting new democracies have ready access to numerous sources of local, uncensored information. Additionally, the British Broadcasting Service, Cable News Network, and the duplicative U.S. service, the Voice of America, all still provide information to these formerly totalitarian countries. There is no excuse to continue funding for Radio Free Europe--the people in the formerly communist countries of Europe and the former Soviet Union have access to a wealth of uncensored information.

Though we would happily eliminate Radio Free Europe, we have instead proposed rescinding only \$40 million, leaving it with \$175 million for FY 1995. That amount should be more than sufficient. Radio Free Europe is currently downsizing, and in the process is giving its former employees severance benefits that are so generous that they border on the criminal. At a minimum, Senators should support a \$40 million reduction because the American taxpayers should not have to pay for such benefits.

The next part of the Harkin amendment would add back \$26 million in funding for the CPB. This add back would keep the Federal contribution to the CPB steady over the next two fiscal years by keeping up with inflation. The rescission in the Hatfield amendment, in contrast, would impose a hard freeze on the Federal contribution, which in real terms would be a cut because of inflation. We emphatically oppose any cuts in the CPB budget. The CPB is a beacon of hope and sanity in a culture immersed in violence. Republicans, though, charge that it is elitist and undeserving of handouts. They then make the claim that CPB programming can survive in the free market. We find that claim to be ridiculous. For example, we could not imagine watching Ken Burn's Civil War series on a commercial network. The poignancy of that series, which reduced us to tears, would have been ruined if it was constantly interrupted by Budweiser and pickup truck commercials.

The final element of the Harkin amendment would add back the \$14 million rescission that the Hatfield amendment would make in the Senior Community Service Employment Program. In the three decades this program has existed it has had broad bipartisan support. It serves 67,000 people per year, finding jobs for thousands of elderly Americans. It also serves as the main support for most meal-on-wheels programs and rural elderly day-care centers. A high priority program like this one should not suffer any reduction.

In summary, the rescission for Radio Free Europe is justified because Radio Free Europe is a useless anachronism; the CPB needs Federal funding and deserves it because of the quality of its programming; and the Senior Community Service Employment Program is too important to be cut. Therefore, we support the Harkin amendment, and urge our colleagues to do likewise.